



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Cordelia Park Indoor Shelter located at 2100 N. Davidson Street, Charlotte, NC at 6 p.m. on September 11, 2018.

PRC MINUTES

September 11, 2018

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present: Heidi Pruess, Chair
Rick Winiker, Vice-Chair
Peter Engels, Executive Secretary
Sterling Martin
Brian Cox
Blanche Penn
Doug Burnett
Tristan McMannis
Rufus Kearney
Paul Freestone
John Leonard

PRC Absent Vacancy – North 1
Mary Foxx Johnson

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair, Heidi Pruess, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair, Heidi Pruess, welcomed all to the September 11, 2018 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. Each Commissioner introduced themselves and the region they represent. Staff and guest were also introduced including members of the Central Advisory Council and public present with interest on the topics of the Dowd House, West Charlotte Recreation Center

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amenities and senior transportation.

Public Appearance

Cynthia Harrison, President of the Historic Camp Greene Neighborhood Association, came before the Park and Recreation Commission to ask for an update on the Dowd House. Members of this Board were also present. (Director Lee Jones provided an update under the “Director’s Report”.)

Venita Hood came before the Park and Recreation Commission in support of an additional outdoor shelter for West Charlotte Recreation Center. Ms. Hood shared that before the Recreation Center was built, the park had two shelters. However, accessibility was lost when it was decided to separate the park from W. Charlotte High School.

Allie McClain came before the Park and Recreation Commission with a request that the Park and Recreation Department provide bus transportation to an upcoming Sr. Convention in October. She also asked for timely communication of information and programs, such as the recent senior voucher program. Ms. McClain asked that the center’s hours of operation be adjusted to accommodate seniors, and that more programming and adequate meeting space be provided.

Awards and Recognition: None

Standing AC Reports and Appointments

North – Blanche Penn

Commissioner Penn reported:

- Not all recreation center staff were properly informed of the Senior Citizen program
- North Reappointments
 - **North**
 - One (1) Vacancy – No Applications
 - Cathy Young – Special Reappointment to a 4th Term or Vacancy
 - **Doug Welsh – 1st Term – Defer to October PRC Meeting**
 - Adam Pasiak – 1st Term
 - Iris Bonano – 2nd Term
 - Patricia Poteat – 1st Term
 - **Kendel Phillips – 1st Term – Vacancy**
- **Motion was made** by Commissioner Penn to reappoint North Advisory Council Members to another term as indicated above, expiring 6/2021, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously. (Kendel Phillips declined reappointment and a decision on Doug Welsh will be deferred to the October PRC meeting.)

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Central – Peter Engels

Commissioner Engels reported:

- At their July meeting, with regard to Land Acquisition and Preservation, the Central Advisory Council discussed unique options for land acquisition in the Central Region where developable land is at a minimum:
 - Increase partnerships with CMS to temporarily acquire space for recreation programming in neighborhoods with service gaps
 - Investigate partnerships with developers to increase number of rooftop parks and greenspace in the city core
- Regarding Active Community Engagement, they raised concerns over the Play60 co-branding with Lowe's Home Improvement in Freedom Park and that the AC was not consulted prior to a decision being made.
 - A request was made through Chair Pruess for information regarding County policy on logos and sponsorship in public-private partnerships

Director Lee Jones will provide the PRC with details on the Lowes logo and sponsorship.

South – Doug Burnett

Commissioner Burnett reported:

- At their July AC meeting, the South AC toured new facilities/parks/improvements.
- The new agenda format was discussed. The AC was receptive to the new format and the opportunity to provide feedback, voice their concerns and make more of a difference.
- Several members would like for the Department to put a line down the middle of the Greenway network to separate the traffic for safety purposes.

Aquatics – Peter Engels

Commissioner Engels reported:

- Received an update on program participation showing a record number of participants in aquatic programs
- The AC received a review of the aquatic components of the Eastway Regional Recreation Center.

Athletics – Sterling Martin

Commissioner Martin reported:

- Athletics AC's last meeting was in July and the next meeting is scheduled later in September. No report currently.

Cooperative Extension – Rick Winiker

Commissioner Winiker reported:

- The Cooperative Extension is a partnership with P&R and NC State with a focus on gardening. All were encouraged to visit their website for all the programs offered by Cooperative Extension. <https://mecklenburg.ces.ncsu.edu/>

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Greenways – Rick Winiker

Commissioner Winiker reported:

- Regarding adequate funding, the Greenway AC has been working diligently to provide meaningful feedback to staff as they enter the budget cycle. AC members have met with individuals around the community that deal with all aspects of trails that intersect with the greenway network and with the UNC Charlotte Center for Applied Geographic Information Science regarding population growth for Charlotte and the County. This document will be included on the October PRC meeting agenda.

Sr. Citizens – Tristan McMannis

Commissioner McMannis reported:

- The Sr. Citizen AC has not met since the new agenda format was introduced. The last meeting was July 11:
 - Reviewed the current meeting agenda and ways to improve or change
 - Discussed how to be better advocates and get the word out that the Senior Centers are available to the community
 - Two AC resignations: Gale Hobbing and April Barnes
 - Discussed a community concern regarding the need for an additional shelter at West Charlotte Recreation Center
 - Discussed the need to identify shelters as ADA accessible at the time of reservation

Stewardship – Heidi Pruess

Commissioner Pruess reported:

- Regarding Land Acquisition and Preservation:
 - Standard Operating Procedures for Natural Resources Maintenance and Operations is under development
 - Appropriate application of the invasive species funding (i.e., which parks are best suited for this funding) is currently under review by staff
 - The following motion passed: "Parking is restricted in the vegetated area within the Gar Creek ROW South of Sample Road during the growing season, defined as approximately March through October."
- Regarding Adequate Funding:
 - Stewardship Advisory Council members are interested in investigating the use of collected fees for programs for on-going issues like invasive species removal.
- Regarding Active Community Engagement:
 - Over 1,500 residents attended this year's Hummingbird Festival at Reedy Creek Nature Preserve. Nature Center programs were attended by 2,819 citizens (in 113 programs) during the month of August.

Commissioner Penn inquired about the naming request for Abersham.

Director Lee Jones reviewed the naming request from Cathy Denham to name Abersham

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“Monarch Butterfly Park”. The Department will not be naming this park to “Monarch Butterfly Park” but offered to name a portion of the park “Monarch Meadow”. Director Jones will draft a letter regarding this request and the Department’s decision to Commissioner Puckett and the PRC.

(Note: An update on this naming was made by Chris Matthews at the August PRC meeting:

Chris Matthews, Division Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources, gave an update on the request from Cathy Denham, resident of Davidson and school teacher in Iredell County, to rename Abersham Regional Park to Monarch Butterfly Park. Ms. Denham based this request on the existence of milkweed in the park. It was determined that this property does not have a high concentration of milkweed to attract a significant number of monarch butterflies, and after meeting with Ms. Denham on the park property and bringing the request before the North Regional Advisory Council, this renaming request has been denied and the Department will move forward with signage and naming the park Abersham. The Department offered to name a portion of the park, Monarch Meadows, which would be managed for habitat for monarch butterflies and would include educational signage to explain the connection between the Monarch and Milkweed. Ms. Denham was happy with this; however, she is still opposed to the name of Abersham.

Commissioner Martin shared that he recently learned that Abersham is a Welsh word meaning a confluence of water.)

PRC Chair Report

Chair Heidi Pruess reported on the following:

Monthly AC Report Form: PRC were reminded to complete the Monthly Advisory Council Report form and turn them in to Administrative Support in advance of the PRC meeting.

Budget Input: Due to the budget timeline for the Department and the PRC meeting schedule, Chair Pruess asked that the PRC gather budget input from their Advisory Councils and have that information available at the October 9 PRC meeting. This information can be gathered at the next Advisory Council meeting or by e-mail. Peter Cook, Deputy Director, shared the basic timeline of the budget and the four main budget categories: Operational Needs, Capital Improvement, Strategic Business Plan and One-Time Funding.

Annual Report to the BOCC – November 7, 2018: All were reminded that the Park and Recreation Commission will be making their annual report to the BOCC on November 7, 2018 at 6 p.m. and were asked to begin submitting to Chair Pruess any items they would like to be considered for inclusion in this report.

Commissioner Burnett requested Park and Recreation provide the PRC with land acquisition data from the past 5 years, future park plans and future recreation center plans in order to

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provide better feedback to Advisory Council members on land acquisition concerns. Director Jones advised that Jacqueline McNeil has the information for the last fiscal year and is working to pull together the last five years.

Community Engagement:

Citizen Awards: Chair Pruess will gather the information necessary from various organizations that make awards associated with Park and Recreation and the deadlines. The PRC will work together to determine a process for making nominations as a board. Some organizations that make awards are NCRPA, NRPA and our local non-profit partner, Partners for Parks.

Commissioner Cox shared that as a member of NCRPA, he recently nominated Commissioners Pat Cotham and Jim Puckett for the NCRPA category “Distinguished Legislator” for leading the charge on behalf of the PRC to get the funding for the 2008 bond projects.

Commissioner Penn suggested a PRC award program for Park and Recreation volunteers.

Commissioner Penn encouraged the PRC to get out and meet the employees of Park and Recreation. Chair Pruess said that Commissioner Kearney had made a similar suggestion for PRC to be more active in getting out and meeting people to better nominate for awards.

Adopt a Park: Chair Pruess, representing the PRC on the Partners for Parks board, shared the suggestion from the PRC for an adopt a park program. Partners for Parks has tried this program in the past with little success. They are currently considering a “membership” program to increase awareness and the effectiveness of their mission as well as raise additional funds for park projects. Members would donate to general fund buckets such as playgrounds, greenways, events, etc. People interested in a hands-on experience would be directed to the Park and Recreation volunteer program already in existence.

Partners for Parks 10th Annual Awards: All should have received information about the upcoming Partners for Parks 10th Annual Awards event on October 11 at 6 p.m. at the Cordelia Indoor Shelter. This information offered the opportunity to buy a ticket to the event or become a sponsor.

Director’s Report

Director Lee Jones reported on the following:

American Legion Memorial Stadium

- The County is funding \$32 million for the renovation of American Legion Memorial Stadium. This renovation will protect the area as part of Independence Park and expand the existing footprint to accommodate a variety of events and various sports, including amateur soccer.
- Jenkins-Peer Architects in association with HOK (an architecture firm specializing in

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sporting venues) has been selected as the architect.

- A construction manager at risk will be selected to keep the project on budget, keep the project on schedule, meet the design objectives and deliver a quality product.
- A kick-off design meeting was held on September 6, 2018 with the architect and stakeholder group.
- Community meetings will be scheduled, and the PRC will be notified.
- The Department is working on a use agreement for Charlotte Independence, probably 10 to 15 uses per year.
- The field will be environmentally friendly synthetic turf to accommodate as many events as possible without the recovery time of a natural turf field.
- Exact seating has not been determined but will be a balance of fixed seating and multi-purpose areas for seating and gathering.

Dowd House:

- In response to an inquiry made several months ago to the County Manager's Office regarding the Dowd House property, the County and the Historic Landmarks Commission is developing a Request for Qualifications to identify a prospective owner to purchase and develop two County parcels – the Historic Dowd House, 2216 Monument St. and former Fire Station #10, 2136 Remount Road – in the Camp Greene neighborhood of West Charlotte. The County owns two additional parcels at the site that will continue to be owned by the County and used as open space, should the Dowd House and former Fire Station #10 be sold.
- Two community meetings were held to receive input on the renovation and adaptive reuse of the existing facilities. Results of these meetings can be viewed here: [Dowd House Site - Public Feedback](#)
- Basic Timeline: BOCC discussion, RFQ released, guided tour of the Dowd House, Phase I and community input, Phase II and community input by mid-December and a recommendation to the BOCC by the end of January.

Independence Park Update:

- Prior to an RFQ going out for the Independence Park renovation, staff met with the Elizabeth neighborhood and received their input on the RFQ, particularly as it related to the greenways and connectivity. (The RFQ can be viewed here: [Independence Park RFQ](#))
- Once the designer is on board there will be at least two community meetings to allow for discussion and input.

Motorized Vehicles on Greenways:

- Considering safety concerns regarding motorized vehicles on greenways, such as motorized scooters, Department staff are reviewing the current Park and Recreation Ordinance to include and address current modes of transportation. Once completed, a draft of those changes will be shared with the PRC for input.
- Our current ordinance does not allow motorized vehicles on greenways and this

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ordinance is enforceable by CMPD.

The Eastway Regional Recreation Center Groundbreaking has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.

Consent

Motion was made by Commissioner Winiker to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of August 14, 2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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